

J O H N
D R E W

By

EDWARD A. DITHMAR



J O H N D R E W



John D. Brown

JOHN DREW

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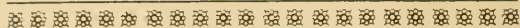
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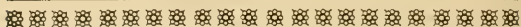
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JOHN DREW

Part First

UNTIL very lately John Drew had been for years the most approved representative on our dramatic stage of gay, volatile young gentlemen, and in this present hour, more because of the accidents of the play market, I believe, than for any signs of the flight of years in his appearance or his demeanour, he is accepted as the type of polite man of the world, the social philosopher, never too strenuously philosophical, the courtier, the wit, the diplomatist, just



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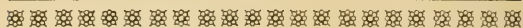
at the threshold of the middle years. Mr. Drew is, perhaps, the most essentially “modern” of all our actors. His elegance is the elegance of a chapter of Henry James, rather than that of a scene by Congreve. He has acted with admirable skill in the “old comedies,” and with rare eloquence in plays of Shakespeare; but in the public mind he has been most closely associated with plays of the passing hour, and the moods and manners of the immediate present. He is, in the popular phrase, “un-theatrical.” It is felt that he takes the manners of polite society from the drawing-room directly to the



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stage. Yet Mr. Drew is one of a comparatively few prominent actors of this day who were actually born to the stage. He is of the third generation of a theatrical family; both of his parents were actors, and so were their parents. He began his theatrical career at the age of nineteen years, and served an apprenticeship in the stock company of the Arch Street Theatre in Philadelphia, nearly two years before he got his opening in New York.

I can recall vividly the impression I received, in 1875, of the young actor who made his first appearance, February 15th of that year, at the



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Fifth Avenue Theatre in the taking rôle of Bob Ruggles in *The Big Bonanza*, a comedy in which the plot and characterisation of the German "Ultimo," by Von Moser, were adapted as closely as possible to an American environment. Ruggles was a glib but well-meaning youth who met a nice girl on her way home from boarding school, helped her out of some trifling predicament on the railroad, and thereafter paid successful court to her; an easy-going, gracefully graceless, light-hearted, inconsequential sort of chap, with a saving sense of humour to restrain the follies of passion and lend piquant effect to



MRS. JOHN DREW
As Mrs. Malaprop in "The Rivals"



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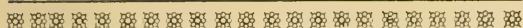
his harmless gallantries. In fact, Ruggles was a typical "light comedy" part of the era, then declining, when "lines" were strictly observed and the parts in plays were "cast" by the stage managers almost as a matter of course. As a light comedian, in the hour which was still Lester Wallack's, when, too, the polished assurance and brisk patter of Mathews were vividly remembered, young John Drew had many deficiencies. Lightness of touch in any branch of art is not easily acquired, and Drew reached fame by no royal road.

In *The Big Bonanza* we all liked him, because his was a personality



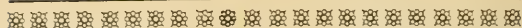
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new and pleasing, because he was unaffected and gentlemanly ; and some of us saw a promise of something better in his work. Yet the old stagers did not hesitate to say (they never hesitate to say anything cruel about young actors), that he “made nothing at all” of his opportunities. He scarcely “played up” to the experienced Fanny Davenport in his love scenes with her, to be sure, yet he had individuality, and he walked the stage with the ease of one born to it. Drew remained at the Fifth Avenue Theatre more than two years, until its manager, the late Augustin Daly, suddenly gave up the lease at the



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very beginning of the theatre season of 1877-8, and probably in the interval he made some sort of progress toward popularity, but the company was numerous, and the manager autocratic. Mr. Daly observed no "lines" in casting his plays, and although the youth from Philadelphia began in a "light comedy" rôle, half a dozen more experienced actors would have been delighted to get, yet he did not figure conspicuously as a light comedian in the distributions generally. Low comedy "character" parts, walking gentlemen and utilities (chiefly the last-named), fell thickly to his share, and he was accounted



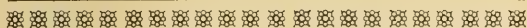
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reasonably harmless in most of them. His Dudley Smooth, in 1876, seemed to me an uncommonly clever piece of work, but I suppose the veterans of that time considered that it lacked depth and weight. I liked him very much as the rattle-brained youngster, Thorsby Gyll, in *Pique*, which he played with really buoyant effect, but the performance did not set the town ablaze.

Young Drew's "recognition," properly, was to be deferred till he grew artistically strong enough to bear success. He had two years of varied experiences, some of them picturesque, as a travelling actor



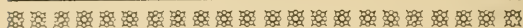
JOSEPHINE BAKER
As Moya in "The Shaughraun "



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before his opportunity came. In the earliest weeks of Daly's Theatre, weeks of uphill labor, which called into exercise all its manager's strength of purpose and indomitable courage, Mr. Drew did not figure very brilliantly in the company, but along in November Mr. Daly gave him a small lecture and a good part.

"I gave you Bob Ruggles," he said, "and you did nothing with it; I wrote Thorsby Gyll expressly for you, and you did nothing to speak of with that. Here's your last chance. Make a hit in this, and I'll advance you in my company. Fail, and I'm done with you."



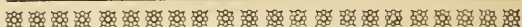
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Emphatic words, but the great manager had a way of using such words and of meaning what he said, and just that kind of heroic treatment did worlds of good to many a young actor who had the good fortune to serve under his sway. I do not think that Drew had been neglectful of his duty that autumn. Not many good parts had gone his way, to be sure, but I well remember how clearly he denoted the few appreciable traits of the Rev. Harry Duncan, the mild young clergyman, in a few performances of Daly's *Divorce*, put on as a stop gap, and the manliness and dramatic force of his acting of Arnold Brink-



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worth in a single performance of the dramatisation of Wilkie Collins's *Man and Wife*. Still he was duly humble and grateful, and I can testify from personal observation that he took his lesson seriously to heart, and worked as he never worked before in mastering his new part. He spent hours locked in his room, long after he had learnt the words, piecing together significant bits of illustrative business, harmonising in his mind the details of action settled upon at rehearsal. His reward came in the boisterous applause bestowed upon his alert, humorous, graceful acting in the new play, *An*



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Arabian Night, November 29,
1879.

His character was Alexander Sprinkle, a young married man oppressed by a formidable mother-in-law, who, in the most innocent mood imaginable, occasionally seeks adventure in the manner of that renowned Caliph of Bagdad whose glory is celebrated by Scheherazade. Mr. Drew has acted many better parts in a similar vein since that night of his first notable triumph ; toward the close of his long and memorable engagement at Daly's, he took up the same rôle under a different name, in Sydney Grundy's much more compact version of the same



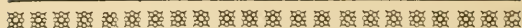
JOHN DREW

As the Adjutant in "The Passing Regiment"



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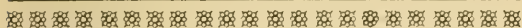
German play which, like the original of *The Big Bonanza*, was written by Von Moser. But that was the night that "made him quite," though I fancy he would not have been "undone" if the popular verdict had been against his performance. His inborn talent would have told in time. *An Arabian Night* had the first considerable run of that first season at Daly's, and John Drew's was the most distinguished personal success in its performance. From that time on he was an actor to be reckoned with. From that time the good qualities in his acting never lacked appreciation in as large measure as



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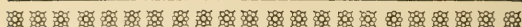
the best of actors can hope for. He had passed safely through his apprenticeship, and was, henceforward, until he deliberately became a star, a "leading man," though Mr. Daly discountenanced even the empty forms of "lines" of work among his actors.

It is necessary, before proceeding further with this record of his career, to put down some of the particulars of his origin and his novitiate. He was born in Philadelphia in November, 1853, and was educated in that city at the Protestant Episcopal Academy. He was fitted for entrance to a university, but, instead, after a short trip abroad,



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went upon the stage to earn his own living in the theatre so long managed by his mother, known in her later years as the inimitable Mrs. Malaprop of Mr. Jefferson's condensation of *The Rivals*. In his two seasons of service at the Arch Street Theatre, young John Drew pretended to be divers and many persons for the entertainment of Philadelphians. Officious Cousin Crummy in *Betsy Baker*, Mr. Hornblower in *The Laughing Hyena*, and a dozen or more similar secondary rôles in old farces fell to his share. He was sentimental Adolph de Courtroy in *The Captain of the Watch*, wicked but penitent



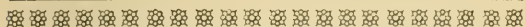
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Captain Crosstree in Jerrold's *Black Eyed Susan*, Dolly Spanker in *London Assurance*, insulted Gaspar in *The Lady of Lyons*, — "Oh, Melnotte, a blow!" — bashful Cousin Modus in *The Hunchback*, and the County Paris in *Romeo and Juliet*, the last three rôles in the support of the renowned Adelaide Neilson, then the loveliest Pauline Deschappelles, Julia and Juliet of the stage.

Mr. Daly went to Philadelphia to see a new play called *Women of the Day* which was acted at the Arch Street Theatre in the winter of 1874-5. There was a dearth of good new plays and this piece,

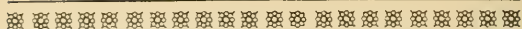


JOHN DREW AND ADA REHAN
As Eric Thorndyke and Kate Verity in "The Squire"



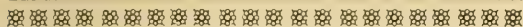
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written by a member of Mrs. Drew's company, Charles H. Morton, who had been the original actor of the title rôle in *The Black Crook*, was better than some others. Daly bought it and produced it in his beautiful New York house, with a distribution which would not have been amiss in the *The School for Scandal*. But the play is not remembered now for that reason, or for the crisp humour of James Lewis, as the light-hearted young husband, the mellow fun of Davidge, as a story-telling physician, or the voluble delivery by Miss Davenport of a description of a new frock which was actually its most memo-



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rable passage, but for the fact that it served as a stepping-stone in the career of John Drew. He acted in Philadelphia the rôle of Major Alfred Steele, taken in New York by Lewis, and the visiting manager from the metropolis was more favourably impressed by his display of rudimentary ability than were the famous London manager who went to Portsmouth to see Miss Henrietta Petowker, and saw also the Infant Phenomenon, and that other historic impresario who sat in a box to observe the effect of Old Bows's training upon Miss Fotheringay, impressed by what they saw. For Mr. Drew was en-



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gaged forthwith for a place in the splendid company of the Fifth Avenue Theatre.

The Big Bonanza filled out the remainder of that season of 1874-5 at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, and the young recruit acted volatile Bob until nearly midsummer. The next season, as a compensation for the monotony of his work in this, he was cast for many and all kinds of parts. He had the small rôle of Freddy Carter in a revival of Bronson Howard's farcical *Saratoga* at the beginning of the term, and soon afterward Mr. Daly temporarily gave up his theatre and the services of his company to the

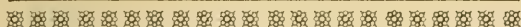


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reintroduction to the New York stage of Edwin Booth, who had retired for a while after his pecuniary failure at Booth's Theatre, and had sustained severe injury also in a runaway accident, the report of which had helped to greatly increase the show of public sympathy with him. This engagement under the management of Augustin Daly, was important in the history of the foremost American tragedian of his epoch, and it was not wholly unimportant in the career of John Drew. Not very much praise fell to the youngster's share for his perfectly well-meant efforts in Shakespeare's plays, I sup-

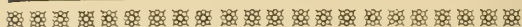


JOHN DREW AND ADA REHAN
As Mr. and Mrs. Ford in "The Merry Wives of Windsor"



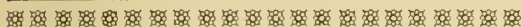
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pose, but the experience was certainly valuable to him. Mr. Daly induced Mr. Booth to take up a new rôle, Richard II., the last new character, as I remember, that Booth studied. His portrayal of the hesitating Plantagenet was one of his most eloquent and most pathetic performances, but the people never warmed to it. The play is, unquestionably, dry and cold, and after 1878 Booth dropped the victim of Bolingbroke from his repertory. In his first performance of the rôle, the character of Sir Pierce of Exton, the obscure gentleman whose duty it was to wickedly kill the imprisoned King, was carried in a sufficiently



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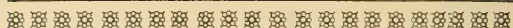
workmanlike manner by John Drew. In *Lear*, the young actor appeared briefly and modestly as the King of France; while in Bulwer's *Richelieu*, he was earnest young François, to whom there is no such word as fail. He also appeared as Francis in *The Stranger*. In *Hamlet*, which was, of course, the most conspicuous play in the great tragedian's repertory, I am not sure whether his character was Rosencranz or Guildenstern. My own record says one, Mr. Drew's memory says the other; but he is not sure of his memory, and treats the matter in a reprehensibly light-hearted way, intimating that he does not care.



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This sort of carelessness is painful to the theatrical biographer. It is quite clear that Mr. Drew could not have doubled the courtiers, because they are always on the stage together. On the other hand, I am not sure, in the circumstances, of my record, and playbills, in such minor matters, are very misleading historical documents.

Another star engagement at the Fifth Avenue Theatre that season was that of Clara Morris, who had made her fame at the first Fifth Avenue Theatre, under Daly's management, a few years before. She appeared, without securing



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much public support, in a new version of Daly's adaptation of Mosenthal's "Deborah" called *The New Leah*, and Mr. Drew was the supposedly amusing village barber and surgeon. *Pique*, a drama in five acts, founded partly on a story by Florence Marryat called "Her Lord and Master," and partly on a chapter in "Les Misérables," was produced December 14, 1875, and held the stage till the roses of 1876 were in bloom. In this Drew's Thorsby Gyll was the companion and adviser in mischief of a red-headed youth named Sammy Dymple impersonated by James Lewis. Thorsby was just a New



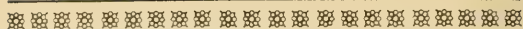
JOHN DREW
As Belleville in "The Country Girl"



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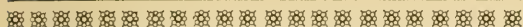
York lad of that particular epoch, concerned not too deeply in the workings of a decidedly melodramatic plot, and involved in a mild little romance with a happy ending. *Pique* was a drama of incident, and its interest, too, was largely pictorial. Mr. Drew was a comparatively unimportant young actor among a dozen players of large experience and established repute; but, as I have said, I treasure a very pleasant remembrance of the spirit and humour of his performance.

The part was a boon to him after his experience in some of the minor rôles of Shakespearean plays, to give



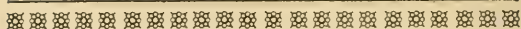
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anything like the proper tone to which he then lacked presence and the tact and command of traditions the older actors possessed. Nothing is more likely to take the vanity out of a youngster who has enjoyed a few little triumphs in easy, colloquial rôles of modern comedy, than an old-fashioned, rather hap-hazard course of Shakespeare. To be dignified, personable, and interesting while trying to be a courtier of Elsinore or a baron of England, after two or three perfunctory rehearsals, and clad in things out of the stock wardrobe, is almost impossible. The productions of poetical drama at the



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Fifth Avenue Theatre in Mr. Booth's engagement were not prepared in the careful and expensive manner of Mr. Daly's later revivals at Daly's Theatre. The customary allowances had to be made for haste and frequent changes of bill. If the subordinate actors knew their parts, little more was required of them. You may be sure that Drew always knew his part. But when Thorsby Gyll came to him, he was the very youth, even though he may have missed possible bits of "business" and shades of comic meaning that a more experienced comedian would have given to the performance.

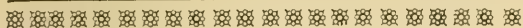


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Among the young actor's professional associates in this stage of his career were several players of great distinction. James Lewis had not yet reached the zenith of his fame, or done nearly his best work, but he had few equals in broad comedy; while the company of the Fifth Avenue Theatre also included rare old William Davidge; Frank Hardenbergh, a "character actor" of wide range; John Brougham, then nearing the close of his brilliant career; Charles Fisher, Owen Fawcett, Louis James, Daniel H. Harkins, who quite lately has been a conspicuous member of Mr. Drew's own supporting company; beauti-

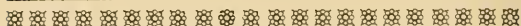


JOHN DREW
As Captain Flume in "The Recruiting Officer"



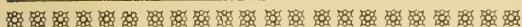
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ful, bird-like Sara Jewett, Mrs. Gilbert, and Fanny Davenport, whose power as a melodramatic actress was just beginning to be felt. She long retained *Pique* in her repertory after she became a star, because of the chances for showy acting, acting of the loud, vigorous, and strongly pictorial sort, that tells best in melodrama, the rôle of the heroine, Mabel Renfrew gave her. Miss Davenport, almost from the beginning of her career, and she was an actress at the tender age of twelve, had been regarded as a comédienne exclusively, and she had even made a notable little hit as Lady Gay Spanker in *London Assurance* be-



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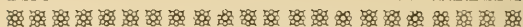
fore she was fairly out of her teens. She had in her earlier years many qualifications for comedy. The sparkling laugh, which is inseparable from the rôle of the coquette in the old plays, and the trick of which seems to have eluded most of the contemporary actresses, perhaps because elegant coquetry has gone out of fashion in comedy, she could do to perfection. But as she grew older, lightness was not a characteristic of her work, and her powers of expression developed toward the sterner emotions. Positively the most graphic, forcible, and moving piece of acting she ever did was in the third act of



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La Tosca, the scene of Mario's torture.

John Brougham was a benevolent and loquacious old family physician in *Pique*. The part offered few opportunities, but Brougham's day was nearly done. He had a "benefit," one of the old-fashioned "benefit" sort that spring, when he acted his old part of jovial Murphy Maguire in *The Serious Family*. John Drew appeared in that once familiar play as Frank Vincent, who is but a "walking gentleman," who is humbler than a landscape painter; and he was also one of the chorus of Indians, Opodildoc, I believe, but that does not matter, in



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Brougham's burlesque play called *Pocohontas*, which was also in the bill. There were a number of other similar special performances that season, all given afternoons, because *Pique* held the stage uninterruptedly at night, and Drew had something to do in each of them. He acted the polite gambler, Dudley Smooth, in Bulwer's *Money*, for the first time at Harkins's benefit matinée; while at James Lewis's he appeared as Tootle, in a forgotten comedy by H. J. Byron called *Weak Women*, in which the popular beneficiary, as Captain Ginger, had a character he liked, one, in fact, he saw and felt himself in. This play had never



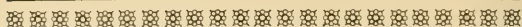
JOHN DREW
As Petruchio in "The Taming of the Shrew"



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been seen in New York before, and it has never been repeated, but it had been briefly in the repertory of Mr. Daly's players when they visited San Francisco the previous summer.

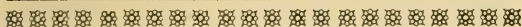
As You Like It was given for Miss Davenport's "bespeak," with her distinguished father, E. L. Davenport, as Jaques, Lawrence Barrett as Orlando, William Castle, then probably the most popular tenor in English opera, as Amiens, Davidge as Touchstone, and Miss Davenport, of course, as Rosalind. The record I have at hand says that Drew was Lebeau, the polite courtier of the usurping Duke. But he distinctly



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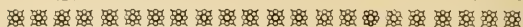
remembers that he came on in the last scene as young Jaques du Bois, to deliver that trying explanatory speech which has proved a stumbling block to so many novices, because he recalls that both Davenport and Barrett spoke kind words to him about the way he got through with it. "They would do that, of course," he modestly adds. Probably he "doubled" the parts. His last new rôle that season was Captain Vivid in the old farce of *The Siamese Twins*, which was in the bill for the benefit of the business manager, Stephen Fiske.

The next season that accomplished actor, Charles Coghlan, made his



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first appearance in America as a member of Mr. Daly's company. The play was *Money*, and his portrayal of Alfred Evelyn was the last of any striking merit and was also one of the best the old stagers of that epoch had ever seen. Bulwer's *Money* belongs to a past age, as surely as Addison's *Cato* and mad Nat Lee's *Rival Queens*. Indeed, it held the stage long after its hour of departure had struck, because Evelyn was always a character in comedy tragedians, and "heavy" men liked to fancy they could act, and the piece had so many other long parts encrusted with theatrical traditions, and associated with famous actors.



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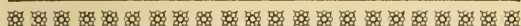
In my memory there has been no better performance of Bulwer's stilted piece in New York than this in which the sentiment of Evelyn was so tastefully denoted by Coghlan, and his priggishness so delicately and even agreeably expressed; while Davidge was the most amusing of Sir Johns, and Fisher the mellowest Mr. Graves of his day; while Brougham acted Stout, and Drew was really a satisfying Dudley Smooth.

The young actor was "out of the bill" a great deal this season. He had a sick spell, and there were no parts for him in some of the plays. In a comedy called *Blue Glass*, in



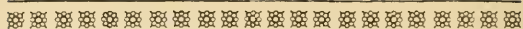
JOHN DREW AND ADA REHAN
As Howell Everett and Val Osprey in 'The Railroad of Love'





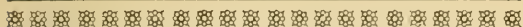
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recognition of one of the silly fads of the hour, he appeared as Reginald Haven, but the part was nothing, and the piece lasted only a few nights. This was another of Mr. Daly's adaptations of German farces, but one that did not score. In a few performances of *The Lady of Lyons*, he acted Glavis, and he had the rôle of Noirtier in a melodrama called *The Princess Royal*, which was put on very elaborately, but did not last long. Late in the season Adelaide Neilson appeared at the Fifth Avenue Theatre as a star, and Mr. Drew then had some more of that desirable journeyman experience in Shakespeare as he is acted.



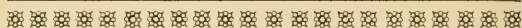
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To be sure, he had the much coveted rôle of Sir Andrew Aguecheek, in *Twelfth Night*; but as William Winter wrote of his performance, in his notice of Miss Neilson's Viola, that it was "well-meant, but entirely mistaken," it is not likely that he gained much fame from that. I remember him as an equally well-meaning Cloten in *Cymbeline*, and what a dreadful part Cloten is, to be sure! Drew was quite as good as the gentleman who tried to portray the barbarity and folly of that ancient Briton in the late Margaret Mather's very beautiful production of *Cymbeline*, though not quite as much the man pictorially as Wil-



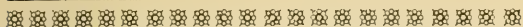
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liam F. Owen, whom I remember to have seen act Cloten to the Imogen of Helena Modjeska. But Cloten, Pisanio, Iachimo (that fine old Bowery actor, Studley), Posthumus (eloquent Eben Plympton) were of small moment, for the Imogen was all in all. Imogen was the rarest and sweetest portrayal of Adelaide Neilson. There has been no Imogen since fit to compare with hers, which represented the perfect flower of her genius and art. Cleopatra was to have been her next rôle, and she would have been the greatest Cleopatra of all theatrical history, but she died too soon.



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Early in the next season Mr. Daly's tenancy of the Fifth Avenue Theatre, which stood on the site of the present house bearing that name, but was not nearly as comfortable or commodious, ended abruptly. It had been unfortunate in the very beginning, with Albery's mistakenly named comedy, *Fortune*, which ran five consecutive nights and then was heard no more; and the only plays which had long runs in the four years were *The Big Bonanza* and *Pique*, the only two in which young John Drew was actually conspicuous. So it may truly be said that he was identified with the best fortunes of the house. When the



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first Fifth Avenue Theatre, the dainty little house of the rose pink auditorium, burned, after the matinée New Year's Day, 1873, Daly was prosperous; but he had big undertakings on hand, and much money was needed to temporarily establish his large company, while the Gilseys were building the new house at Twenty-eighth Street, and to carry on his expensive side issue of resplendent spectacle at the Grand Opera House. He once told me that he began operations at the new Fifth Avenue Theatre thirty thousand dollars in debt, and, with all his efforts, and it could never be



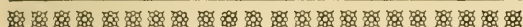
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said of him in those days that he adhered blindly to any one policy in the face of certain failure, he was unable to recuperate. His rent was the biggest in town, and the season of 1876-7 was bad almost beyond precedent. For some weeks after the terrible destruction of human life in the burning of the Brooklyn Theatre, December 5, 1876, all the plays were given to empty benches. To cap the climax, the rent was increased at the beginning of the new season.

An adaptation of the French melodrama, "Les Compagnons de la Truelle," called *The Dark City*,

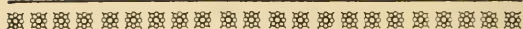


JOHN DREW
As Orlando in "As You Like It"



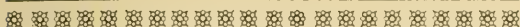
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was elaborately mounted September 4th, and all the members of the company had more or less suitable rôles. The name of Drew's character was Tommy Kipps. Seemingly, however, no one wanted to see a play called *The Dark City*, and after a week of disaster, Mr. Daly threw over the lease and started out upon the road, with Fanny Davenport as his star, and most of the actors engaged for the Fifth Avenue Theatre in her support. Miss Davenport had filled starring engagements in some of the larger cities in the two previous years, out of the New York season, and already had a follow-



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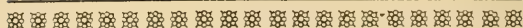
ing. In this tour, which included an engagement at Booth's Theatre in New York, and lasted until well along in the spring, Mr. Drew acted Thorsby Gyll in *Pique*, Sylvius in *As You Like It*, Sir Benjamin Backbite in *The School for Scandal*, and Sebastian in *Twelfth Night*. Mr. Daly sacrificed his extensive collection of theatrical and other books to pay his debts, and paid a hundred cents on the dollar. After a short rest he went abroad for the first time to study European drama, as an adapter of which he had large European fame, in its own abiding places. He was forty years old, and before him lay



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many prosperous years of royal endeavour.

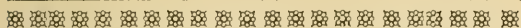
John Drew, looking for an engagement away from "the Governor," found one in the company his brother-in-law and his sister, Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore, were organising, with Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Warde and Mr. and Mrs. Majeroni, to perform *Diplomacy*, Clement Scott and B. C. Stephenson's adaptation of Sardou's *Dora*, which had been prodigiously successful at Wallack's, with Lester Wallack and H. J. Montague as the brothers, and Rose Coghlan as the perfumed adventuress, and must be regarded as one of the most successful and



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typical plays of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The distribution which this travelling company was enabled to give to the play was really exceptionally strong. Warde was Henry and Barrymore, Julian Beauclerc; Georgie Drew Barrymore, Dora; the Majeronis, capable Italian actors who had learned to talk English, if not to understand it, Count Orloff and Countess Zicka.

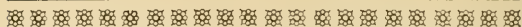
Mrs. Majeroni's English speech was very agreeable and distinct, but her lack of comprehension of the language was amusingly illustrated once when she was acting in *Camille* in Brooklyn. In Margue-



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rite Gautier's scene with her money-eyed admirer, in Act II., he asks her how much she owes. The answer is, "Thirty thousand francs," which is supposed to slightly shock Cræsus; but the fair Camille replied instead, "Thirty francs," and went on with her part industriously, quite unconscious of the amazement of the audience.

In *Diplomacy*, Mr. Drew was Algie Fairfax. The company started well with good "notices," and the best wishes of all their friends; but the vast machinery of the modern combination system had not been perfected then and the names of Barrymore, Majeroni, and Warde

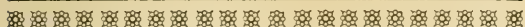


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were not, indeed, names to conjure with, though pertaining to estimable and comely young persons. As the subject of this biographical sketch blithely expresses it, "Business was very bad, so Warde and Barrymore decided to halve it, and split the company in two." The Barrymores, accompanied by Drew, with Ben Porter, an old fashioned actor of some repute, and Ellen Cummins for Henry Beauclerc and the Countess, went southward. In Texas, late that season of 1878-9, Miss Cummins, Porter, Drew, and Barrymore were making a poor and hasty meal in a railroad restaurant. James Currie, a statesman of that



JOHN DREW AND ADA REHAN
As Young Mirabel and Oriana in "The Inconstant"

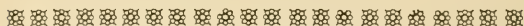


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neighbourhood, paid his addresses, without waiting for the formality of an introduction, to the lady, and her companions remonstrated with him. Being in his most chivalrous and statesmanlike mood, Mr. Currie replied in the renowned Texan fashion. Porter was killed, Barrymore wounded, and the tour of *Diplomacy* ended by brief but effectual Civil War.

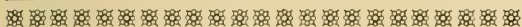


JOHN DREW



Part Second

THESE years I have dwelt upon, perhaps with too great persistency, were not the most interesting in the career of a renowned actor, but they were of the utmost importance to him. In them he served his apprenticeship in the art in which he became a master-workman. They included four years of stock company duty, two of them in an old fashioned company of the typical sort, with a change of bill every week and the "lines" rigidly observed, two more in the



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service of the most autocratic, original, and artistic manager of the metropolis in his day, under the strictest discipline. They included tours over the whole country, from Boston to San Francisco, from Detroit to Galveston. When they were finished, the young man could feel that he knew much of the seamy side of an actor's life. He could say, with poor Tom Wrench, in *Trelawny*, that he had had his full share of parts that were very serious and very little. Yet it must be admitted that he had enjoyed many advantages denied to most beginners. As the son of the manager of the theatre, and bearing a



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name long honoured in theatricals, he enjoyed a certain distinction in the Philadelphia company; while in New York he began almost at the top of the ladder instead of on the traditional lower round. First and last, however, he had his full allowance of apprentice work, and it was not as a favoured and overpraised darling of fortune that he entered the troupe organised by Augustin Daly in the summer of 1879, to begin his new career at the theatre which was to become honoured all over the English-speaking world as Daly's.

Returning from his visit to England, France, and Germany in the spring



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of that year, Mr. Daly had made a tentative experiment in theatricals by producing his own version of Zola's *L'Assommoir* at the old playhouse called the Olympic, which an earlier generation had esteemed as Laura Keene's, and which had for some time been regarded as superfluous. This playhouse was cleaned and painted, and *L'Assommoir* was performed in it a few weeks. The incident would have been forgotten but for the connection with it of the fortunes of Ada Rehan, who had a small part in the Zola play, and, in an emergency, took a more important rôle, and enjoyed a small but memorable triumph. This led



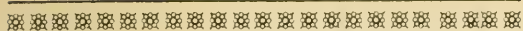
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to her engagement for the company at the new theatre on the site of Banvard's and Wood's Museums, and her long association with John Drew. In the history of the American stage, the names of these two dramatic artists are inseparably linked.

The dominating idea of Mr. Daly when he began in the remodelled and redecorated house at Broadway and Thirtieth Street seemed to be to cater to the public liking for light musical comedy which had been stimulated by *Pinafore*, the success of which as popular entertainment has been equalled by very few stage plays. His opening



JOHN DREW
As Charles Surface in "The School for Scandal"



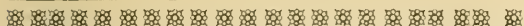
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bill comprised a little comedy called *Love's Young Dream* and a musical farce taken from the French "Niniche," called *Newport*. In the first of these Miss Rehan, whose place in the troupe was subordinate to that of Catharine Lewis, a singing comédienne, and of no more importance than that of May Fielding, another songstress, Mabel Jordan, and some half dozen others, was not too happily cast as an uncertain lady who appeared in the scene clad unbecomingly in a bathing costume. In *Newport*, Mr. Drew acted Tom Sanderson, a bathing master, who in the course of the proceedings donned female



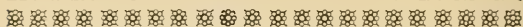
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attire and assumed an Irish brogue. Despite the pleasing appearance of the house and the manager's eloquent announcements of his wares, the public stayed away from Daly's Theatre in the first few weeks of its existence with great unanimity. *Divorce*, which had run all through a long season at the first Fifth Avenue Theatre, was put on for a stop-gap, and in this Mr. Drew's acting of the meek young clergyman, who was nevertheless a manly and self-reliant fellow, was excellent. In Bronson Howard's *Wives*, a showy "costume" piece, manufactured by squeezing together scenes and incidents taken from



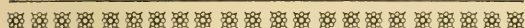
J O H N D R E W

two comedies of Moliere, “L’École des Maris” and “L’École des Femmes,” with a hint, too, of “Les Femmes Savantes,” Drew’s rôle, a thankless one, was Chrysalde, and Miss Rehan was also disadvantageously placed. In this entertainment Miss Lewis lent her attractive comic opera manner to the character of Agnes, Harry Lacy played Horace gracefully and well, while those two fine old veterans, Fisher and Davidge, were quite at home as Arnolphe and Sganarelle. The fortunes of the new theatre, however, were not soundly established by *Wives*. A series of special matinées, for the purpose of



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testing the abilities of the younger members of the company, were given early in the season. Drew, as I have said, was admirably placed as loyal young Arnold Brinkworth in Daly's dramatisation of Wilkie Collins's *Man and Wife*, in which Lewis's place as Sir Patrick Lundie was taken by Charles Leclercq, and Mrs. Charles Poole acted the dumb housekeeper, a picturesque rôle in which Mrs. Gilbert had triumphed. Those two estimable artists, whose names are as closely associated with the best achievements of Augustin Daly as those of Drew and Miss Rehan, were then members of a troupe managed by Henry E. Abbey.



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With *An Arabian Night*, John Drew's hour of triumph had struck at last. The lively comedy had a smart run, and there was much talk in town about the briskness, grace, and humour of the young comedian's denotement of the shifts and perplexities of the imaginative husband in his encounters with a watchful mother-in-law, impersonated spiritedly by Mrs. Poole. Catharine Lewis was the fascinating circus rider, and Charles Leclercq her protector, the "strong man;" while Miss Rehan had another quite hopeless rôle, as the ingénue with the make-believe toothache. When *An Arabian Night* had run its

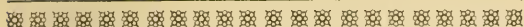


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course, the stage of Daly's was held for many weeks by a musical burletta or operetta from the German of Genée, called *The Royal Middy*, in which Mr. Drew had no part; but the last fortnight of the season was made notable by the first appearance together, in those "opposite" rôles which they so long and brilliantly sustained on that stage, of Miss Rehan and Mr. Drew. The play was another adaptation from the German, with the characters and plot fitted in an American scene, entitled *The Way We Live*. Miss Rehan was a lovely young matron who devoted all her time to fashionable



JOHN DREW
As the King of Navarre in "Love's Labour's Lost"



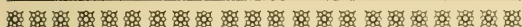
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charities. Mr. Drew was her young husband, whose home was cheerless and neglected because of his wife's devotion to the pagan and the poor. After a few very simple complications a sufficiently plausible and happy dénouement was reached. To tell the truth, *The Way We Live* was not much of a play, and some of its humour was insufferably juvenile; but in the rôle of the young wife Miss Rehan finally revealed her fitness for the work that then lay plainly before her, and Mr. Drew gave new evidence of his ability as a "leading" actor.



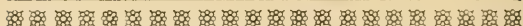
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Miss Rehan had acted charmingly as Lou Ten Eyck, Miss Davenport's original character, in the brief revival of *Divorce*, and had shown uncommon power and a comprehension of dramatic effect in the rôle of the outcast, Ruth Tredgett (also "created" on the American stage by Miss Davenport) in Gilbert's *Charity*. In *The Way We Live*, however, her best abilities were indicated. The most significant scene in this comedy, though, was performed, without Miss Rehan's aid, by a child, a music-box, and Mr. Drew. The husband returned from business late, just as his wife was starting for a



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charitable dinner party where the needs of unconverted savages were to be discussed between the courses. After the wife had gone, the servants slipped off surreptitiously, and the father clumsily but tenderly fed the little boy, and then held him in his arms while the music-box ironically played "Home, Sweet Home." These German comedies were always made a bit too magnificent pictorially at Daly's. Obviously, in this case, the German playwright had treated of lower middle class life, a humble merchant's *ménage* with one maid of all work. The scenic picture in the adaptation was a splendid room



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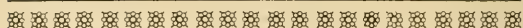
in a mansion in which a veritable retinue of servants would have been needed. But the domestic moral was still potent, and the scene was remarkably well done by Mr. Drew.

The comedian at this stage of his career was a slender, agile young man with mobile features and the springy motion of a well-trained athlete. He allowed himself few idle moments, and when not studying or rehearsing a part (and Mr. Daly always had a new play in rehearsal), he rode, fenced, boxed, and studied music and languages. He had come to a lively understanding of the seriousness of an actor's



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life, of the need of keeping one's physical and mental faculties in trim. Already he was beginning to be known, in a small way, as a man whose taste in dress was worth heeding. As an actor, he was buoyant, unaffected, and entirely competent in the light rôles that had thus far fallen to his share, though the notes of tenderness and fervor he has since struck so surely were still a trifle beyond his reach. Mr. Drew was married, in the spring of 1880, to Miss Josephine Baker, daughter of Lewis Baker, an actor of renown, who died on the very day his future son-in-law made his first appearance on the

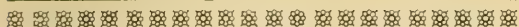


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stage, March, 1873, and his wife, Alexina Fisher, an actress of skill and repute. The Bakers were a theatrical family as renowned as the Drews, and Miss Josephine Baker had been an actress a little while before her marriage. Comparatively young “old stagers” may remember her as a remarkably pretty and taking girl in the first performances of *My Awful Dad* at Wallack’s. In the second season of the Florences in Ben Woolf’s comic piece called *The Mighty Dollar*, she was Libbie,—“Libbie Dear,” as the vivacious Mrs. Gilflory called her young companion.

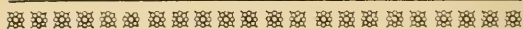


JOHN DREW
As Robin Hood in "The Foresters"



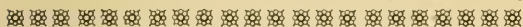
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Prosperity settled upon Daly's Theatre in its second season, although the manager's policy was still somewhat confused by his lingering desire to establish, as it seemed, a new school of musical comedy. In the occasional musical pieces, Mr. Drew had no parts. *Tiote*, a Mexican piece that nobody who does not treasure a collection of playbills can remember, and *Our First Families*, a farce by Edgar Fawcett which was very well meant but hopelessly barren of new ideas, were early new plays of the autumn of 1880, in which Mr. Drew had characters. But presently, in *Needles and Pins*, he



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and Miss Rehan were playing *vis-à-vis* again to some good purpose, and Mrs. Gilbert and James Lewis, who had now rejoined their old manager to remain with him until death did them part, were keeping them good company. This was the first of the comedies from the German in which the renowned quartet appeared together. Miss Rehan was a mischievous miss in her teens, and John Drew the estimable, but merely human, young lawyer whom her fresh charms had captivated. Mrs. Gilbert was a belated heroine of romance with long yellow pigtails down her coy back, and Mr. Lewis was the pre-



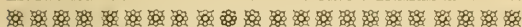
J O H N D R E W

cupitate but elderly and bald-headed bachelor who wooed her. I have no remembrance of the plot of *Needles and Pins*. It was a formless thing, with a burdensome subplot and some superfluous sentimentality, and it was found to have grown very old and feeble in a very short time, after the manner of anæmic plays, when acted at one of the fashionable Daly subscription performances of later years. But it contained some enjoyable comic scenes for the quartet, and it had a good run. It had the appreciable merit of being "a Daly play," unlike plays seen elsewhere. In the fall and winter of 1881-2,



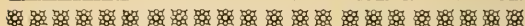
JOHN DREW

both *Quits*, from the German, in which Mr. Drew had a colourless rôle as Bob Cayses, and Mr. Fawcett's *Americans Abroad*, in which he appeared as Charlie Wilks, failed to draw, and Mr. Daly fell back upon a "costume" play, — an adaptation of "La Jeunesse de Louis XIV." by the elder Dumas, entitled *Royal Youth*. This had a moderately good run, but not much is remembered of it except that a ribald reviewer asserted that Mr. Drew, impersonating the "grand monarch" in his youth, resembled "Buffalo Bill in Pantalettes." Drew recalls this rebuke cheerfully. He could always afford to



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take lightly the few gibes critical humourists inflicted upon him. Along in that season, *The Passing Regiment*, another comedy with a German original, gave the light comedian a fairly good part, though not one of any distinctive quality, as the young adjutant. Mr. Daly strained probability a great deal in adapting this military romance to an American environment, and making the basis of the plot a visit to a fashionable country place of a crack militia regiment, instead of the forcible quartering on a town of a detachment of Government troops. Nothing at all like some of the happenings depicted in the

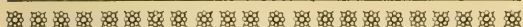


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translated play ever occurred on American soil, but the piece was acted briskly and well, and was cordially received. After its run, an English version of Sardou's unsavory "Odette," somewhat doctored and expurgated to the weakening of its purpose, gave Miss Rehan an opportunity in an "emotional" rôle, for which as yet she lacked a sufficient measure of experienced skill. In this Mr. Drew played Greek Chorus in the rôle of amiable, talkative Philippe. This sombre piece did not seem to fit well into the repertory of Daly's, yet the next season's first new play, *The Squire* by Arthur W. Pinero, which made

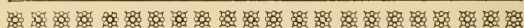


JOHN DREW AND MAUDE ADAMS
As Osstan and Miriam in "Put et flies"



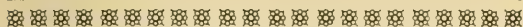
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a notable hit, was even more persistently serious than Sardou's rather superficial study of social life in France before the era of divorce. In *The Squire*, the story of which resembled Hardy's "Far From the Madding Crowd," though Pinero insisted that he had never read that novel, Miss Rehan was an interesting Kate Verity, while Mr. Drew acted with sufficient fervour the character of her impetuous lover, Lieutenant Eric Thorndyke. Mr. Lewis as Gunnion, and Mr. Fisher as the Mad Parson, equally shared the honours with the principals. This season, January 15, 1883, the first of the series of old comedy



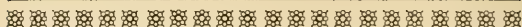
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revivals occurred. The play was Cibber's *She Would and She Would Not*, written in imitation of the Spanish comedy of Intrigue, and much shortened and expurgated for modern use. In this Mr. Drew's well-composed and uncommonly well-sustained portrayal of the frequently baffled yet finally triumphant lover, Don Philip, was always associated with the sprightly Hypolita of Miss Rehan. She never appeared as Cibber's masquerading heroine after Drew left the company to become a star. Each year the piece was revived for a few performances, the increased dexterity and grace of both portrayals was



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noted. Miss Rehan's Hypolita, at first, was frequently strained and hysterical. The rôle is exceptionally difficult for a young actress, as Hypolita "strikes twelve" in the very beginning, and keeps going in the most buoyant spirits until the very end. The performance gained greatly in both discretion and fluency of utterance, in freedom of movement, and in plausibility of action. It came to rank well among Miss Rehan's best achievements. Don Philip, the discomfited cavalier, is not nearly so grateful a rôle. He is nearly always in the wrong; while the madcap who has donned male



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attire, seemingly to pay court to his fiancée, but really to prevent the marriage, and get Philip for herself, triumphs in every climax save one, and that when she has all but gained her end and is ready to capitulate. There was a nice feeling for the antique spirit of the old comedy in Mr. Drew's portrayal of this pseudo-Spanish cavalier, but it had also the modern touch of the humourist who views ancient manners with a purged vision.

She Would and She Would Not gave way, February 24th, to the long successful *Seven-Twenty-Eight*, afterward acted in the English tours



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of the company under its sub-title of *Casting a Boomerang*. This was one of the brightest of Daly's adaptations from the German, and it survived many revivals. Courtney Corliss, however, was merely a nice, quick-witted young man of that particular hour in New York, and the part gave to Mr. Drew no more new fame than attaches to the actor of a rôle in a particularly successful and much talked of play. Similar rôles were Harry Latimer in *Dollars and Sense*, the comedy, of the same general quality and the same nativity, which opened the season of 1883-4, and Tom Crayon, the artist, in the less



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successful piece called *Red Letter Nights*. The last named farce, it was nothing better, did not long survive; but a romping scene in it, in which Miss Rehan sang and danced “Jenny O’Jones,” was transferred to *Dollars and Sense*, which remained some years in the company’s repertory. The old comedy revival of this season was Garrick’s adaptation of Wycherley’s quite impossible “Country Wife,” called *The Country Girl*, still further altered by Mr. Daly, with a part of the best of Miss Prue’s scenes in Congreve’s “Love for Love” written in. This still retains its place in Miss Rehan’s repertory,



JOHN DREW
As Viscount Clivebrooke in "The Bauble Shop"



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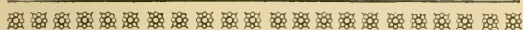
and her fairly matchless portrayal of Peggy Thrift was mated, while Drew remained at Daly's, with his own capital portrayal of adroit Belleville, in which dignity and grace of deportment were always cleverly combined with a mere hint, by way of spice, of latent devilishness left over, perhaps, from Wycherley and the naughty comedy of the Restoration.

Before the Daly company began their next term in New York, they made their first appearance in London in the little playhouse called Toole's Theatre, July 19, 1884, in *Seven-Twenty-Eight*, and the two old comedies, Cibber's and Gar-



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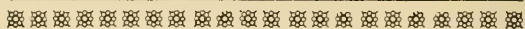
rick's, forming their repertory. Two years later, they went abroad again, acting in London, at the Strand Theatre, and in Edinburgh, Dublin, Paris, Hamburg, and Berlin. Again in 1888, and again in 1890, Mr. Drew and his fellow-comedians acted in London, in the later year at the Lyceum Theatre, when they first appeared in *As You Like It*. These trips abroad continued several years longer, and culminated in the building of Daly's Theatre, Leicester Square. They gave Mr. Drew a certain assured standing as a dramatic artist in the minds of English and foreign playgoers; they introduced him to a



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large circle of acquaintances in the home and club life of London ; but he acted no new rôles abroad, as the company produced its new plays first in its theatre in New York, and a further chronicle of the doings of Mr. Daly's comedians abroad is not within the purpose of this volume.

In the autumn of 1884, some new recruits joined the company, including Miss Edith Kingdon and Mr. Otis Skinner, who were both brilliantly successful at Daly's. Miss Virginia Dreher, who acted second parts to Miss Rehan, had been enlisted a year or so before. Mr. Frederick Bond was also a



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new member of this season. Mr. Drew's associates now included, also, his veteran friends, Charles Fisher, James Lewis, and Mrs. Gilbert and droll and nimble William Gilbert, who for some years was a popular favourite in eccentric and fantastical characters.

May Irwin, since widely renowned as a humourist of variety farce, and one of the regenerators of the "Coon song," belonged to the company then, and new recruits were added from time to time in the next few years. The veteran George Clarke, who had been so conspicuous at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, his skill ripened and de-



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veloped by much and varied experience, rejoined Mr. Daly. Kitty Cheatham, Phœbe Russell, Isabel Irving, Jean Gordon, Sydney Herbert, Herbert Gresham, and Charles Wheatleigh were associates of Mr. Drew during much of his service under the Daly banner. In the years that the sextet of leaders comprised Drew and Ada Rehan, Skinner and Virginia Dreher, Lewis and Mrs. Gilbert, the troupe was absolutely at its best so far as fitness and harmony of the personnel were concerned. From the time of the desertion of the first of them, though the director's energy, discipline, and inventiveness did not



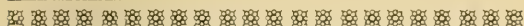
J O H N D R E W

fail him for many years, the company's repute began to wane.

Paul Impulse, in a transformed German piece called, after a time-honoured custom of Yale University, *The Wooden Spoon*, was Mr. Drew's first part this season of 1884-5, and his second (November 25th) was Sydney Austin in *Love on Crutches*, a little comedy, little in its subject and the manner of treating it, rather than its length, which still survives in the repertory of Miss Rehan. Austin has written anonymously a sentimental novel, and his wife Annis, dissatisfied with her domestic surroundings, and yearning for a higher, freer



JOHN DREW
As Mr. Kilroy in "The Squire of Dames"



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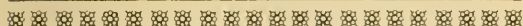
existence, has entered into a correspondence with the anonymous author, using a pseudonym herself. Thus the spectacle is presented of a young husband and wife, believing themselves unhappily married, and conducting a secret correspondence with each other, through a third person, in the belief that they have “found their affinities.” Of course, the happy ending of this whimsical romance is inevitably in sight from the first; but there is no lack of animation in the play, though it requires the daintiest sort of treatment in the performance. This it received at Daly’s in those early days, when the well poised,



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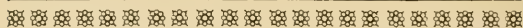
yet sufficiently sentimental husband, the dissatisfied young wife, the common friends with a little romance of their own, and the old couple involved so comically in the proceedings, were acted by Drew and Miss Rehan, Miss Kingdon and Skinner, Mrs. Gilbert and Mr. Lewis.

Drew's old comedy rôle this season was Farquhar's Captain Plume, associated with the fame of Wilks, Garrick, Elliston, and many other renowned actors. He looked particularly well in his Marlborough soldier clothes, and bore himself with a keen sense of the antique humour of the Restoration com-



J O H N D R E W

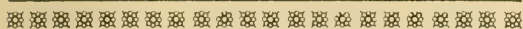
edy; but the spirit of *The Recruiting Officer*, alas, had fled long before Daly tried to revive it. Gay Jack Mulberry, telling fortunes on the cards with Nisbe, helping future father-in-law Babbage with his play, hobnobbing with Mr. Snap, the peripatetic theatrical manager, was his next part in modern light comedy from the German. *A Night Off*, produced in March, 1885, easily ran the season out, and bore many revivals; but it was never better played, excepting in the one character of Snap, the actor, who was fairly recreated and made to live and breathe, late in the history of Daly's, long after



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Mr. Drew had become a star, by Henry Dixey.

The next term Drew took up the character of Colonel Lukyn, the middle-aged soldier and man of affairs, in *The Magistrate* by Pinero, and his portrayal of this rôle, far out of his ordinary line, was happily conceived, polished in execution, delightfully humorous in composition, and well sustained. His acting as Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (January 14, 1886) was correct in form, graceful in bearing, though scarcely formidable in its expression of passion; but the production of the mirthful *Nancy & Co.*, Daly's clever version of Julius



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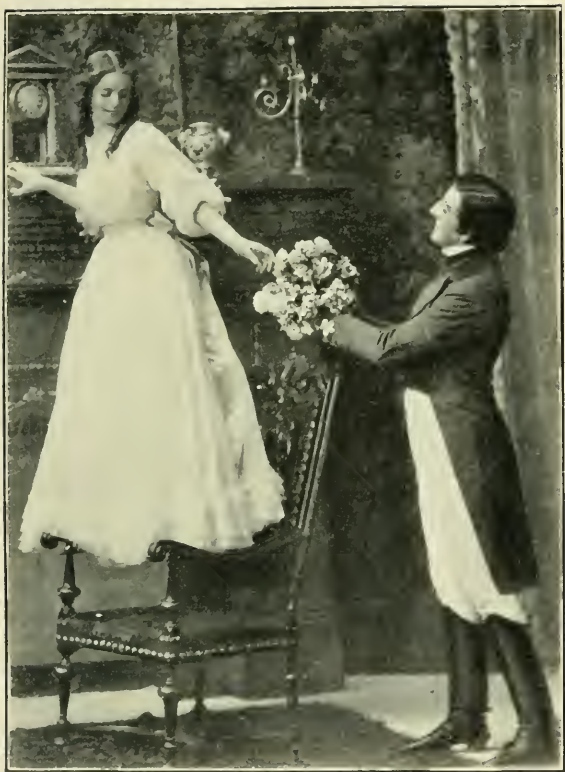
Rosen's "He Pursues His Runaway Wife," less than a month later, gave him an admirable opportunity in his accustomed field of light comedy. This, in spite of its obvious caricature of life, always seemed to me the very best of the lighter and more farcical pieces in the Daly repertory. There is a touch of poetry in it, missing in all the others, and it has a perceptible emotional lift in the last act. Mr. Drew always gave due force to the broadly comic scenes of Keefe O'Keefe, the young dramatist whose collaboration with wilful Nancy Brasher gets him into a peck of trouble, without sacrificing ele-



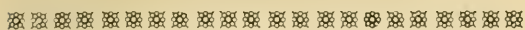
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gance and grace in bearing and diction.

Brandagee, in *After Business Hours* (October 5, 1886), was not a bad sort of a part. The comedy was by Blumenthal, and it lacked vitality, and only one scene played by Lewis, Drew, and Miss Rehan, counted for very much. In *Love in Harness*, which followed, though, Drew had a congenial and effective rôle as Frederick Urquhart, the young husband of a frivolous wife. At that stage of his career he had done nothing better than his acting in the vivacious "quarrel" scenes of this comedy, which was an adaptation of "Le Bonheur.

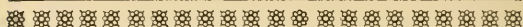


JOHN DREW AND MAUDE ADAMS
As Sir Jasper and Dolly in "Rosemary"



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Conjugal" by Albin Valabregue. There was an undercurrent of earnestness in his acting that heightened the humorous effect. In one episode he pictured a paroxysm of jealous rage in a manner that would have done credit to the actor of Ben Jonson's *Kitely*. He took still another step upward and forward when (January 18, 1887) Mr. Daly put forward *The Taming of the Shrew*, Induction and all, and marked pleasantly an epoch in Shakespearean revivals. This was in every respect a superb work of dramatic art, and will always be remembered to the credit of the American stage. Miss Rehan's



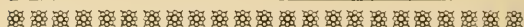
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Katharine has since been her foremost rôle. She is Katharine, and she fairly recreated the Shrew Shakespeare found in Elizabethan drama and illumined with the touch of his own mighty genius. Associated with this portrayal, in her earliest and best performances, was the picturesque, sufficiently forcible, graceful, humorous Petruchio of John Drew, — a lover as well as a wife-tamer, a philosopher as well as a jester.

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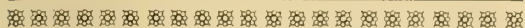
✂ *Part Third*

AS bilious Major Tarver, in Pinero's ingenious and witty comic play called *Dandy Dick*, in the autumn of 1887, Mr. Drew exhibited again, though briefly, for the frequenters of Daly's did not care much for the piece, his talent in the composition of eccentric character and his powers of broadly humorous expression. The personage seems to have been suggested by current fiction and the fun of the rôle borders on caricature. When *Dandy Dick* was recently revived in Lon-



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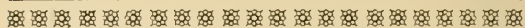
don, complaint was made that some of its characterisation was sadly old-fashioned and extravagant. Caricature does not wear well, but when the play was new, Major Tarver seemed a delightfully droll fellow. He belonged exactly to that hour. Restricted by popular demand, as it seems, to a narrow line of characters calling for small display of versatility, Mr. Drew has yet, in these later years of his successful career, lent all possible variety to his impersonations. In the era in which his father won renown, he would have acted a wider range of parts. Petruchio and Benedick, Mirabel and Don



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Philip, would still have been in his repertory, but he might, for a change, have taken up the part of Trapanti, in which the elder Drew excelled, and which Mr. Lewis acted so amusingly according to his lights. He might, occasionally, have acted Melancholy Jaques, to contrast with his eloquent Orlando, while a comedian of his intellectual equipment and personality might fairly recreate the rôle of Touchstone, — that philosopher in motley, who has latterly been turned over altogether to the low comedy man.

After the cynicism of *Dandy Dick* that autumn, came the sentiment of



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The Railroad of Love, taken from "Goldfische," by Rosen. This comedy, which had but little verity as a picture of possible happenings in American society, was nevertheless received with enthusiasm and held the stage some months. Drew was Lieutenant Howell Everett and Miss Rehan was Val Osprey. Many other good actors were in the cast, and the plot was complex enough to give them fairly interesting and important parts, but these two, as usual, were the central figures. She was a widow, lovely and experienced in coquetry; he was an irresistible young army officer, expert in the



JOHN DREW

As the Comte de Candale in "A Marriage of Convenience"





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subtle arts of the lady-killer. They had met briefly before, but the gentleman did not immediately recognise the lady when they were introduced at Miss Van Ryker's ball. She remembered him vividly, however, and could not suppress her smiles when she recalled him in the act of captivating two simple little *fräuleins* in a German railway carriage. They flirted, of course. He employed all his arts, but she outwitted him. Then chance, or Cupid, favoured him, and she was defeated. It was at first a merry war of wit and mock sentiment, but before two days had passed they were desperately in love. Then,



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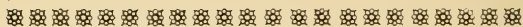
before they fully understood each other, that venomous reptile, Jealousy, had crept across their flower-strewn path, and when it had slinked out of sight again, the woman had written a letter that had to be recalled before he knew of its existence and she was at her wit's end to accomplish this purpose. There was a scene, then, full of passion and hysterical emotion, which lifted the comedy far above the level of frivolous entertainment. The picture of Drew and Miss Rehan exchanging soft words from either side of a half-open boudoir door remains vividly in the memory of folks who saw *The Railroad of*



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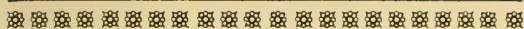
Love when it was a new play. The scene, too, in which Drew, as the blind slave of *Love*, sat obediently and patiently bending over an embroidery frame and bungling the stitches, "one, two, three, four, cross," was novel and taking. Drew portrayed the young Lieutenant in a graceful and easy manner exactly fitting the character, and in the serious passages revealed the strength of an inherently noble nature.

As the "spotted and inconstant" Demetrius in the elaborate and costly production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (January 31, 1889), Drew was as picturesque, ardent,



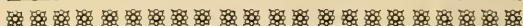
J O H N D R E W

and gallant as need be and seemed to get as far as possible away from his usual manner. Then, as always, his reading of the verse was fluent and correct and governed by a perfect sense of melody. In the next Fall his portrayal of Adolphus Doubledot in *The Lottery of Love* at Daly's was coincident with Constant Coquelin's acting of the French equivalent in the original piece by MM. Bisson and Mars, "Les Surprises du Divorce," at Palmer's across the street. Neither comedian advanced an artistic step because of this rôle, but both acted with excellent humour and vivacity, and there were many intelligent



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theatre-goers who actually preferred the lighter, daintier touch of Drew to the broad, rather violent manner which the various-voiced Coquelin found suitable to this extravagant farce. In this season John Drew acted Young Mirabel to the lovely Oriana of Miss Rehan. It seems all but impossible to galvanise the comedies of Farquhar into life, though I fancy that in this particular hour something might be done with his mellow masterwork, *The Beaux' Stratagem*. *The Inconstant*, like so many other famous old plays, contains only one vitally strong situation, and that in the very last scene. But Drew's por-



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trayal of the scapegrace of the era of Queen Anne was of quite uncommon pictorial and dramatic interest, and at that time, next after his Petruchio, his most successful venture in the field of romantic comedy. He presented Mirabel as a blithesome and elegant fellow, full of sentiment which his idea of manly honour impels him to conceal.

Clive, Lord Ravenstoke, in a flat and tedious but splendidly mounted play from the German called *An International Match*, that winter, showed the growth of the comedian's skill in depicting the perfect breeding and savoir faire of a man of the fashionable world.

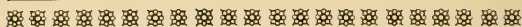


JOHN DREW
As Sir Christopher Deering in "The Liars"



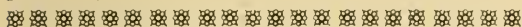
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I remember the acting of a little scene, a mere excerpt of social routine, by Mrs. Gilbert and Drew, that was positively exquisite in its denotement of the manners of good society. But this and many of his other rôles in modern plays during the remainder of his stay with "the Governor" were but trivial. *The Golden Widow*, Sardou's unsavoury "Marquise," shorn of nearly all its vicious meaning, gave him no chance at all; while as Cousin Ned in *The Great Unknown* ("Die Beruhmte Frau"), he was limited practically to one charming scene of love-making. Orlando fell to his share (and his acting of the gallant,



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gentle lover largely increased his repute among persons of artistic discernment both here and in London), December 17, 1889, and along in that winter he appeared as the young French advocate whose pretty mother-in-law makes much trouble for him innocently in *A Priceless Paragon*, which was taken from the "Belle Maman" of Sardou and Raymond Deslandes. In the recurrence of Von Moser's *Haroun al Raschid*, this time in a version by Sydney Grundy, the same spring, he easily carried off the honours again; but in *New Lamps for Old*, a play by Jerome Jerome that was not a play at all,



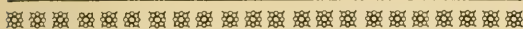
JOHN DREW

the next October, he had nothing to do worth doing. His best new rôle in modern comedy this season was Harry Rutherell in *The Last Word*, which was a comedy of the quality of *The Railroad of Love*. Harry was the "woman hater" of all sentimental romance, transformed, of course, into a lover. His old comedy rôle at this time was Charles Surface in *The School for Scandal*, January 21, 1891. This portrayal was a revelation of unexpected qualities in the equipment of this fine comedian. So much vivacity, so much sparkle, in his denotement of high spirits were scarcely expected of him. That



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his Charles Surface should lack neither the elegance of polite breeding nor personal grace was not surprising. His delivery of Sheridan's text was expected to be both precise and fluent, but the freedom and dash of his acting carried all before him and made Charles, indeed, the hero of the play. Since Lester Wallack's prime there have come under my notice only two impersonations of Charles fit to compare with this; namely, Charles Coghlan's and that of a young actor who did not live to reach the fulness of his powers, Harry Hitchcock Murdoch, who lost his life in the burning of the



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Brooklyn Theatre. The charm of Murdoch's Charles, which would have become an impersonation of rare merit, was in its consistent buoyancy rather than its elegance. His volley of merry and infectious laughter after the fall of the screen still lingers in my ears. Coghlan acted here with his customary reserve of force, while Drew's Charles bore himself gaily but with an obvious sense of the pity of Lady Teazle's predicament. I am inclined to think that Murdoch's was the right, the Sheridan, reading of the scene.

Late in the spring of 1891, Mr. Drew acted the King of Navarre



JOHN DREW

in Mr. Daly's second revival of *Love's Labour's Lost*, a play which no other American manager ever dared to touch. With its dainty setting and some good acting, this early satire of euphemism was to me much more interesting than *The Merry Wives of Windsor* ever is in these days, except in Verdi's musical setting, in which the Falstaff of Victor Maurel is the best Falstaff this age has seen. But it would be folly to consider the King of Navarre an important rôle in the career of a famous comedian. A few nights of Pinero's delicate humour in *The Cabinet Minister*, which utterly failed of apprecia-

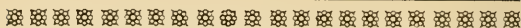


JOHN DREW AND BLANCHE BURTON
As Sir Christopher Deeting and Mrs. Ebern timer in "The Liars"



JOHN DREW

tion, gave Drew small opportunity in the rôle of young Valentine White, but he found a more taking character in *Love in Tandem*, which was founded on "La Vie à Deux" of MM. Bocage and de Courcy. Richard Tompkinson Dymond was an impossible fellow who might easily have been made intolerable. Drew made him companionable and suggested humorously the workings of a rather slow mind. His last rôle at Daly's, in the spring of 1892, was Robin Hood in Lord Tennyson's dramatic poem called *The Foresters*. Miss Rehan as Marian, Miss Cheatham as Kate, with her lovely song



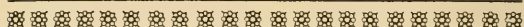
J O H N D R E W

of the bee, Mr. Gresham as Little John, had the most taking parts in this. Mr. Drew's success was chiefly that of tasteful elocution, correct bearing, and a fine sense of pictorial effect.

J O H N D R E W

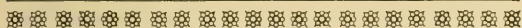
Part Fourth

MR. DREW began his work as a star actor under the management of Charles Frohman, at Palmer's Theatre, New York, October 3, 1892. His play was *The Masked Ball*, adapted from the French of Bisson by Mr. Clyde Fitch, not an important piece or one whose incidents remain vividly in the memory, but one which served its purpose well all through the comedian's first tour with his own company. There was a great and enthusiastic crowd in the theatre that note-



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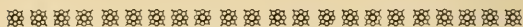
worthy "first night" to give the new star a "send off," and no chronic grumbler in the cause of dramatic art could rationally protest against the encouragement given to him. The enthusiastic admiration of the best sort of American playgoers for Mr. Drew and his acting has not diminished in the eight years that have since elapsed. That "first night," after the merry penultimate climax of the Bisson farce, the comedian was, of course, summoned before the curtain. A part of his modest speech is worth a place in this permanent record of his career : —



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“It is trite and hackneyed, perhaps, to allude to a particular time as the proudest and happiest moment in one’s life, but if ever phrase were apt for an occasion, I feel that particular one is befitting this moment. This splendid welcome accorded to me by you—kind friends rather than spectators or auditors, who have with your plaudits and consideration encouraged me for so many years in the past—makes this, indeed, a proud and happy moment for me.

“But I feel that all these plaudits and this great greeting might not have been for me had it not been for one who taught me how to merit and deserve them—who from the beginning of my career has watched and guided my steps, smoothing the way to success for me,



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and encouraging me in moments of trial and discouragement, and, in fine, striving to make me worthy of this honour to-night.

“I feel, too, that this poor and halting tribute of the heart is little to offer after the years of care and trouble he has bestowed on me, but it is from the heart, and I wish to offer it. I am glad, too, to offer it before you, — his friends as well as mine. I see that I need not name him, — my friend and preceptor, — Mr. Augustin Daly.”

In *The Masked Ball* that charming young actress, Miss Maude Adams, began an artistic association with Mr. Drew which lasted nearly five years. Her mock drunken scene, in the rôle of Suzanne, the young wife

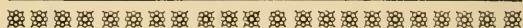


JOHN DREW, IDA CONQUEST AND ARTHUR BYRON
In "The Tyranny of Tears"



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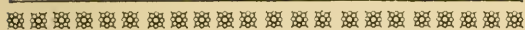
of the scapegrace, bent on teaching him a wholesome lesson, was exquisitely delicate and humorous. As Paul Blondet, Drew was again the light comedy protagonist of a whole school of farces, but the dexterity and spirit of his acting were sufficient to make the conventional matter effective. Of course, one does not leave a performance of farce of this quality with the feeling of satisfaction engendered by a performance of genuine comedy. The afterglow is nothing. The farce dies as the curtain falls. One has laughed heartily and that is all. Yet the choice of this purely comic piece for the beginning of Drew's



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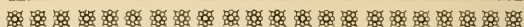
new venture was justified, and nearly eighteen months elapsed before the comedian required another play.

In the same theatre, February 6, 1894, he appeared as Frederick Ossian in a slight comedy by Mr. Henry Guy Carleton called *Butterflies*. In this the subject was American, and so, in every respect, was the treatment of it. Frederick Ossian was a heedless, well-bred young man, suddenly sobered by his realisation that the course of true love does not run smooth—and by his tailor. He was in love, and he was in debt. His love seemed to be hopeless, and he could not pay his debts. But



JOHN DREW

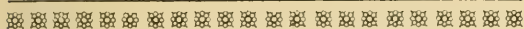
presently he went to work, and then his love was rewarded. Incidentally he was shown to be capable of forbearance and self-sacrifice. This fragile piece was still something much better than horseplay farce, and it served the comedian well for more than a year. The triumph in it, in an exceedingly grateful part, of Miss Olive May was an incident which, as contemporaneous stage history goes, may fairly be called historical. *Butterflies* had been performed by Drew and his company in other cities before it was seen in New York, and this was afterward the case with other plays of his reper-



J O H N D R E W

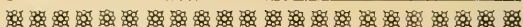
tory, but only the dates of the metropolitan first performances are given here.

A much graver, if not positively a more serious work was *The Bauble Shop* by Henry Arthur Jones, the English playwright, which served Mr. Drew so well the following season. The argument in this was that the private immoralities of a statesman's life may be used by his enemies to defeat and humiliate him in public life, and the argument is unanswerable. The piece seemed to hit the public fancy here rather more surely than in London, as its extravagances of detail were not noticed on this side of the



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Atlantic, where, for poetical purposes, the tower of Westminster is as far off as the minarets of Constantinople or the Egyptian Pyramids. The first half of the play was very interesting, while the second half was not quite feeble and inconsistent enough to ruin it. There was a great deal of merit in Mr. Drew's portrayal of Viscount Clivebrook, the leader of the party in power, a cynical, brilliant statesman of forty odd years, who rashly falls in love with the daughter of a drunken toy-maker. His acting was distinguished by dignity of bearing, graceful vivacity, nervous force, and an adequate meas-



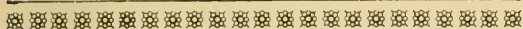
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ure of dramatic power. Maude Adams as the drunkard's innocent daughter acted a rather conventional rôle so well as to make it seem lifelike, while Elsie de Wolfe, J. E. Dodson, Arthur Byron, Harry Harwood, and Frank Lamb, who has been concerned in every play in which Mr. Drew has starred, lent efficient assistance. There were no "great moments" in *The Bauble Shop*, however, and it contained at least one positively repellent scene. Mr. Drew's New York headquarters had been transferred, by Mr. Frohman, with the production of Jones's drama from Palmer's to the more modern and beautiful



JOHN DREW, FRANK LAMB AND ARTHUR BYRON

In "The Tyranny of Tears"



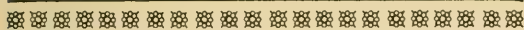
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Empire Theatre, and here he began his next metropolitan engagement in the following autumn, the play being *That Imprudent Young Couple*, by the author of "Butterflies," which Drew and his company had tried in a rural theatre the previous spring under the name of *The Love Knot*. In this Mr. Carleton had endeavoured to secure the same effect of thistle-down lightness he had produced in his former comedy, but his material barely served for one interesting act, and the piece failed to draw. All the same, it contained a scene for Mr. Drew and Miss Adams in Act I. which I like to remember, while its



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starting-point, the failure of John Annesley to post two letters his bride had entrusted to him, was a promising beginning for light comedy. *That Imprudent Young Couple*, however, soon gave place to Madeline Lucette Ryley's amusing play, an "actor's play" if there ever was one, called *Christopher, Jr.*, which was chuck full of good situations and bright dialogue, but defied life, probability, and the laws of dramatic construction in every scene. Both Mr. Drew and Miss Adams had grateful rôles, and the other members of the company were well suited. *Christopher, Jr.*, was first acted at the Empire Theatre, Octo-



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ber 7, 1895, but it had been in the comedian's repertory the previous season and had received many performances in other cities. For that reason, another play was needed immediately, and, January 20, 1896, Mr. Drew began a midwinter engagement at Palmer's, presenting Richard C. Carton's smart adaptation of "L'Ami des Femmes," by Dumas fils, called *The Squire of Dames*. Mr. Kilroy, the equivalent of the French meddler with pathological ideas, could have found no better representative on our stage than Drew, and his refinement and personal humour made the adaptation enjoyable, though Mr. Carton



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kept himself safely many miles from the psycho-physiology of the original author. In fact, smartly written talk was the best feature of *The Squire of Dames*, and its marital and social problem, in the circumstances, happily went for nothing. *Rosemary*, the following season, introduced Mr. Drew once again as a bachelor of forty odd reclaimed from cynicism and roistering by the power of love. *Rosemary*, by L. N. Parker and Murray Carson, was not a great or profound work, not exceedingly witty or very well made, but it was sweet and piquant with a touch or two of genuine feeling that caused sympathetic



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throbs in the spectator's bosom. No other actor of this hour could have played Sir Jasper Thorndyke so well as Drew, taking the portrayal as a whole. He was delightfully light and airy in the gay passages, he was always essentially the man of the world, he composed with admirable skill the picture of senility in the last act or epilogue. Sir Jasper, in his middle years, fell in with a pair of eloping lovers, and presently gave his heart without the asking to the girl, who was very sweet and ingenuous and trusted him implicitly. But, after a severe struggle with his passion, Jasper saw her happily united with Ensign

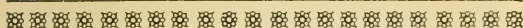


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Westwood, her young lover, and returned to his bachelor ways, to live many years after Westwood and his wife had departed this life, and to find, by a strange accident, a souvenir of his little romance with Dolly, the day of the Queen's Jubilee, in that very inn whither he had taken her to see the Coronation procession. Miss Adams, who was then in her last year as a member of Drew's company, had at that time never appeared to better advantage than in the rôle of Dorothy Cruickshank. In this play, too, Mr. Drew's niece, Miss Ethel Barrymore, who had borne a thankless part in Mr. Carleton's piece the



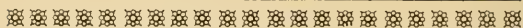
MISS ETHEL BARRYMORE



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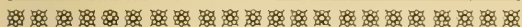
year before, made her first little hit in the character of a rustic serving-maid.

In November, 1897, at the Empire Theatre, Mr. Drew and his fellow-actors presented themselves in a sword and periwig comedy called *A Marriage of Convenience*, adapted by Sydney Grundy from "Un Mariage sous Louis XV." The play turned out to be fragile but pretty, and the performance was adroit and graceful. The scenic setting, comprising a single interior, with painted panels, and the ornate gilding and furniture belonging to the epoch represented, the middle of the eighteenth century,



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could not have been surpassed. In the costuming no detail had been omitted, from the cut of a brocade coat to the fashion of a snuff-box or the design of the silver embroidery on the back of a glove. Powder and patches, court swords and cocked hats, elegant manners with a hint of lamentable morals,—those were the important concomitants of *A Marriage of Convenience*. There was scarcely more than one grave speech in this play, which was nearly all talk, like a comedy of Congreve, which, by the way, it sometimes resembled in form, if not in substance. In the French original the elder Dumas seems to have



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used Marivaux as his model. Mr. Drew embodied with all needful dignity and buoyancy the young Comte de Candale, who fell in love with his young wife less than three days after the wedding, while Miss Isabel Irving, making her first appearance as Mr. Drew's leading actress, impersonated the young Comtesse with delightful charm. They had often acted in the same plays at Daly's, and she had played *vis-à-vis* to him in *The Cabinet Minister*. The inevitable waiting-maid—the Dorine of French classical comedy—was portrayed with much facility of expression



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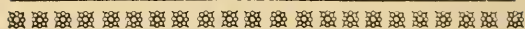
and a nice sense of pictorial effect by Elsie de Wolfe.

Of less interest both pictorially and dramatically was *One Summer's Day*, a comedy, or rather a serio-comic play, compounded not too cleverly of the elements of farce, melodrama, and comedy, by a young English actor, Henry V. Esmond, who has since won substantial recognition as a playwright. In this Mr. Drew acted Major Dick Rudyard, a self-sacrificing bachelor, who is consoled by the triumph of Love for many grievances, at Wallack's Theatre in February, 1898, but a livelier piece was the one-act comedy by Theyre Smith, author of

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“My Uncle’s Will,” called *Mrs. Hilary Regrets*, in which Mr. Drew and Miss Adams appeared at a benefit that winter and in which he has since acted with Miss Irving. This piece concerns the courting of a pretty widow by a rather dense, slow-thinking Irish physician. Mr. Drew’s brogue, though not often put to use, was always as good as John Brougham’s.

The Drew play for the whole theatrical season of 1898–99 was *The Liars*, a sparkling comedy by Henry Arthur Jones, in which the comedian had a particularly good part as the *deus ex machina*, the friend of everybody, the preserver of family



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honour, Sir Christopher Deering. Sir Kit, take him for all in all, was a capital fellow, cool-headed, sound-hearted, practical, amiable, of ripe and varied experience, endowed with fine perceptions and good taste. He had one telling speech in the last act, — a speech full of subtle changes of mood, though the speaker was dominated throughout by one earnest purpose, — which must have been one of the longest speeches in recent drama. In this Sir Kit, who had been devoting his time and ingenuity for four days and four acts to a seemingly futile attempt to prevent the elopement of his closest friend with the silly



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young wife of a common acquaintance, confronted the erring couple in his apartment. The hour was late, and Kit was getting ready to start for Africa to rejoin his regiment on the morrow. He was packing his traps, and, moreover, had just asked a charming woman to be his wife. Wherefore he had little time to spare, yet he took time, not to harangue, not to moralise, but merely to set before these two, the heedless man of passion and the vain woman, a few facts. Irony, grim humour, and deep feeling were all in this speech, and its delivery was a superb example of technique. Scarcely less effective was Drew's



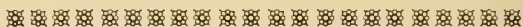
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acting in *The Tyranny of Tears*, which was his play in the winter of 1899-1900. This comedy by Haddon Chambers was really more noteworthy on the score of verity than Jones's rather showier play; and the study of the easy-going husband, who had allowed his wife to control his very conscience and then had a difficult task to readjust his domestic affairs on a common-sense footing, was well within the line of Drew's best parts. Parbury, the novelist, like Deering, the soldier, was essentially a man of this very hour, this particular phase of Anglo-Saxon civilisation. In Chambers's comedy a notable tri-



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umph was achieved also by an actress who had not previously appeared with Mr. Drew, Miss Ida Conquest, who, as Hyacinth Woodward, the novelist's amanuensis, gave spirit and form to a study of character new to the stage and, indeed, to fiction. The sagacious butler, acted by Frank Lamb, was another of the richly humorous, plausible, artistically unobtrusive portrayals of eccentric servitors which that actor had contributed in the support of Mr. Drew. Mr. Lamb, who, like his principal, belongs to an old theatrical family, has long served as Mr. Drew's stage manager.



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Thus the chronicler must leave Drew in the very prime of his artistic career, still a young man in appearance and feeling, still ambitious and energetic. The story of his doings on the stage contains few exciting incidents, and his lot has been cast in pleasant places. His private life has been happily uneventful. He is a member of many clubs, and is much sought in social life both in New York and in London. He has helped, in the beginning of their dramatic careers, his nephew, Lionel Barrymore, and his nieces, Ethel Barrymore and Georgiana Drew Mendum. His daughter,



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Louisa, contemplates adopting the family calling and has already made a purely tentative first appearance in a small part. Mr. Drew has met the chances of existence bravely, has performed his duties nobly, and has fairly won a high place in the esteem and affection of his contemporaries.



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